

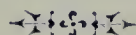
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Inter-University

Christian Union.



JANUARY, 1895.



Origin and Present Position.

BY

DONALD FRASER.

*REVISED
EDITION.*

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93. ALDERSGATE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

THE
Inter-University Christian
Union.

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ORIGIN AND PRESENT POSITION.

THE year 1884 will long be remembered as one of the epochs in the religious history of the British colleges. It was then that Stanley Smith, and C. T. Studd, 1884. two Cambridge men, went to Edinburgh and Glasgow, and some of the other colleges, and spoke with such living power that there was started among the students a far-reaching revival whose influence is felt to this day. In Edinburgh, especially, the medical students were profoundly impressed, and immediately, under the leadership of Prof. Henry Drummond, began to

send deputations to other colleges to tell what God had done for them. In this way several of the leading universities were deeply stirred, and Christian men began to band themselves together in associations to strengthen their own Christian life, and to win others for Christ.

As yet, however, there was little inter-university communication; **Bonskeid.** Cambridge and Oxford had annual Christian Union Conferences, but none of the other universities came close together. A private college conference was held in 1889 at Bonskeid, the Rev. R. W. Barbour's residence, at which representatives were present from at least five universities. Partly as a result of this and of the next year's gathering, an annual conference of the Scotch colleges was started.

But though delegates were sent from one university to another, no **The S.V.M.U.** bond of union had yet been formed. This was to come through a different channel. In 1892 Mr. R. P. Wilder of Princeton, U.S.A., visited some

of the British colleges, and brought the men into touch with the great student missionary movement in America. Following his visits a wave of missionary revival spread through the colleges. He pointed out the need for organization, and as a result of the meeting together of delegates from eight universities the Student Volunteer Missionary Union was formed. During the last two and a half years this movement has been quietly spreading until it has now extended into over sixty colleges, and has enrolled in its ranks more than 800 students.

In July, 1893, the S.V.M.U. summoned

**The First
Students'
Conference.** the first British Students' Conference. It was held at Keswick, and about twenty

colleges were represented. At this Conference a proposal was brought forward, which had already been discussed at conferences held at Glasgow and Oxford, and which had been strongly urged by the delegates who had from year to year visited the Northfield College Conferences. This proposal was that a British Inter-University

Christian Union should be formed. After long and serious discussion the constitution was drawn up, and reads as follows :—

**Constitution of
the I.-U.C.U.**

1. This Union shall be called the Inter-University Christian Union. 2. The object of the Union shall be to unite in work and interest the various universities, colleges, and medical schools, etc., of the United Kingdom by means of conferences, deputations, correspondence, and such other means as may be thought effective. 3. The management of the Union shall be intrusted to an executive committee of three, who shall appoint a general secretary. 4. The presidents or secretaries of the associations affiliated to the Union shall form a general council, and they or their delegates shall meet at an annual conference to elect the executive committee. 5. Application for affiliation to the Union shall be submitted to the executive, by whom the application shall be decided. The following students were then elected to form the first executive :—Mr. Frank Anderson, Oxford

University ; Mr. O. O. Williams, London Hospital ; and Mr. B. L. Livingstone-Learmonth, Edinburgh University.

The aim of a College Christian Association is to unite the students together **Aim.** in Christian fellowship, to advance their spiritual life, to win others for Christ, and to organize lines of Christian work by and for students. Each college is allowed full liberty to adopt such methods as will be most suitable to its own life.

The first year was spent chiefly in affiliating existing Unions, and in **First Year's Work.** discussing the future policy. A little aggressive work was done by the Travelling Secretary of the S.V.M.U., which met with varied success, the best result being the formation of the Christian Union in Queen's College, Belfast. At the close of the year it was found that there were twenty Christian Unions in the universities and medical schools of Britain.

Meanwhile reports were coming to us of the remarkable work of **Foreign Colleges.** God among the students

of other lands. We heard how the College Christian Associations of America had, during the last sixteen years, increased from 30 to 450; how during that time, through their work, 20,000 college men had professed conversion; and how during the last college year, the most fruitful year of their life, no less than 3000 students had accepted Christ. We heard also of the workings of God among the Japanese students, and of that College Conference at which 500 Japanese Christian students were present under the motto, "Make Jesus King."

The question now came to us, How are
Second we to become part of this
Conference. world-wide college movement? For weeks and months continual prayer was being made to God that He would lead out the I.-U.C.U. at the coming Conference, so that it might become a more aggressive power for Christ in the British colleges. This second British College Conference was held again at Keswick during the last days of July of

last year. It was summoned on this occasion by the I.-U.C.U. and met for five days. Delegates were present from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Germany, France, Holland, America, and South Africa; 175 in all, from 47 different colleges, the most representative gathering of college men and women that has yet been held in Britain.

The executive had come up with the conviction that if there was to be any progress, they must make a bold forward movement. After most grave consideration it was felt, from the experience of the S.V.M.U. and of the American College Y.M.C.A., that a Travelling Secretary must be appointed who would devote his whole time to extending the movement into colleges as yet untouched, and to organizing and strengthening the existing branches. It was also decided to share a central office in London with the S.V.M.U., and to appoint a General Secretary who would devote his whole time to the office work of the two Unions.

This, with the hire of halls, advertising the meetings of the Travelling Secretary, necessary publications, and outlay at the annual Conference, would involve an expenditure of at least £500.

Where was the money to come from?

Finance.

On Thursday, July 26th, a meeting of ladies and gentlemen who were attending the Keswick Convention was called for the following day. Much of that night was spent in prayer that God would now seal this movement with His approval by inclining His people to give. The meeting, which was attended by about 110 people, was held in the dining marquee of the students' camp. After the claims of the work had been presented to them, they were invited to give. In a few minutes promises of subscriptions, chiefly for a period of three years, were handed in amounting to £130 for the first year. Another opportunity to give was offered during the Students' Conference, when in response to appeals for funds for both the S.V.M.U. and the I.-U.C.U.

more than £370 was promised, and of that amount £205 was promised by students. Thus, taking the whole of the first day's gifts and the share of the second day's, nearly half of the income necessary for the first year was guaranteed.

These and many other signs of God's **The Result of** blessing during those con-
the Conference. ference days profoundly im-
pressed on men the fact that God is in this
work, and is going before. It would be
difficult to estimate the extent of the deep,
practical inspiration which was received
during this Conference. Two addresses
especially, viz. those of Mr. J. R. Mott,
Secretary of the American College Christian
Movement, on "The Ideal Christian
Union," and on "Personal Dealing," will
never be forgotten by those who heard them.

On the Friday of the Conference dele-
Progress. gates were asked to announce
their plans for the coming
term. Student after student rose, and
solemnly resolved to take a new step for-
ward in his college, so as to render the

Christian Union more effective. This has not ended in talk. During these last months many a university and college has felt the thrill of this inspiration, through the consecrated lives of the Christian men, and through the organized efforts to influence the whole college for Christ. Also many others, which hitherto have been isolated and unaware of these movements, have now fallen into line by the formation of Christian Associations. So rapid has been the progress that during the past eight weeks more Associations have been formed than during the past eight years.

An office has been established in conjunction with the S.V.M.U. **Officers.** at 93, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C., and Mr. Crayden Edmunds, Cambridge, has undertaken the work of General Secretary for both Unions.

Mr. Donald Fraser, Glasgow University, who last year visited the colleges on behalf of the S.V.M.U., is acting during this year as Travelling Secretary of the I.-U.C.U.

The question will now be asked, What field has to be cultivated?

The Field.

Few people understand how large a class the student body is. There are at least 30 Universities and University Colleges, 18 Schools of Medicine, 44 Training Colleges, and 30 Technical Colleges, Military Schools, Agricultural Colleges, etc.,—altogether, at the lowest estimate, 122 Colleges, exclusive of Theological Halls. In these there must be a student population of at least 40,000, banded together by kindred sympathies, kindred temptations, and a kindred occupation. They are the flower of Britain's sons. They are to be our lawyers, our physicians, our scientists, our members of Parliament, and the future leaders of our nation's religious, social, and political life. They will be our representatives on sea and land, our ambassadors to foreign courts, and the rulers of our colonies and Indian Empire. Here, then, is a point of strategic importance. Who is to capture it for the Kingdom of God? Who else but the men who themselves

know, and are in daily contact with the dangers and difficulties of college life?

There is a future then before the Inter-University Christian Union bright with untold possibilities. Let every one who loves the Kingdom have its work as a burden on his heart, that this coming year, which has opened so full of promise, may exceed our highest expectations in fruit borne and progress attained.

NOTE.—One hundred colleges are still untouched. If any students or friends can help Mr. Fraser to get an entrance into any of these colleges, would they kindly communicate with the General Secretary at 93, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.

Publications.

**Inter-University Christian Union—
Origin and Present Position.** Single
copies, free ; 2s. 6*d.* a hundred.

**Report of the Second Students' Con-
ference, 1894.** Price 4*d.* (by post 5*d.*).

These, and the Publications of the American
College Y.M.C.A., may be obtained from the
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